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New Accelerator Offers Students an Entrepreneurial Edge

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Beginning with fall semester 2019, Cedarville University's School of Business Administration will offer an entrepreneurship accelerator program for students across all university disciplines. The accelerator will enable students to launch independent startup companies as well as provide skills and experience to lead a startup function in existing companies by creating new products or pursuing new markets.

"Business is changing rapidly, and many of the changes that are so disruptive are amenable by entrepreneurial solutions," explained Jeffrey Haymond, dean of the school of business administration and professor of economics. "This is a time for a Christian university to take the lead at creating entrepreneurial students — students who are ready to handle the ambiguous and dynamic market economy."

The accelerator focuses on learning by doing. Students can earn college credit while founding, funding and scaling a startup company. Company-sponsored, on-campus internships and projects will also be available for interested students.

As part of the accelerator, pitch competitions, similar to ABC's "Shark Tank," will be held at Cedarville. Judges will include venture capitalists, private equity leaders, angel investors and current business owners. These will not be mock scenarios, but real pitches where pitch competition guests who are impact investors will invest capital in the best student founded startup companies.

A fall and spring entrepreneurship practicum will also start with the launch of the entrepreneurship accelerator. Any Cedarville student may enroll in this one-to-three-credit course. Sponsoring companies have selected challenging projects that require marketable solutions. Students will work in project teams to propose and deliver solutions to be delivered in the marketplace through the sponsoring companies.

The accelerator will also create a new Cedarville role: entrepreneur-in-residence. This position will allow current business owners, venture capitalists, angels and venture attorneys to provide campus hours to mentor Cedarville students and to contribute in classes along with faculty within the entrepreneurship accelerator.

"Students who want to be entrepreneurs will ultimately create our future in the marketplace," stated Richard Blanc, director of the entrepreneurship accelerator program. "The marketplace provides critical resources to churches, schools, communities, nonprofit ministries and families, and at the center of the marketplace is the startup economy. We want every Cedarville student to have the opportunity to have influence and prosper as they use their influence to advance the cause of Christ."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.